

## Reforming of The System of Higher Education in The State of the Former Soviet Union: Characteristics and Problems

Nursafa Gafurovna Khairullina<sup>a</sup>, Oksana Vyacheslavovna Ustinova<sup>a</sup>,  
Natalya Lvovna Antipina<sup>a</sup>, Vera Konstantinovna Zykova<sup>b</sup>, and Tatyana  
Alekseyevna Romanova<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Industrial University of Tyumen, Tyumen, RUSSIA; Tyumen Higher Military Engineering Command School (Military Institute) named. Marshal of Engineering Troops, Tyumen, RUSSIA; Tyumen State Medical University, Tyumen, RUSSIA

### ABSTRACT

The processes of globalization that took place in the modern world, significantly influenced on system of management of higher education, refocusing it on subject-subject relationship by achieving a balance of interests of the individual, society and state. The priority task of reforming higher educational system of Republic of Kazakhstan is integration into the world educational space by bringing the management of Kazakhstan's system of higher education in line with international norms and standards. This led to significant changes in organizational, structural plans, updating educational content and improving quality of training in accordance with current socio-economic and political conditions of the country's development and progressive experience of developed countries. The authors make a conclusion that system of higher education today is an area of interaction of state and society interests in the face of their institutions and citizens. It involves compulsory participation of subjects of educational relations in administration and ability to influence on functioning and development of higher education system and also to be responsible for creating conditions which are necessary for higher education system to accomplish its social and educational functions. There are some facts that prevent from cooperation of designated subjects in management of higher education system in Republic of Kazakhstan such as lack of social and personal constituent in management of higher education system, lack of legal and regulatory framework to attract individuals and society to the management of the higher education system, lack of cooperation of state authorities with the public regulatory institutions in determining of higher education content.

### KEYWORDS

World educational space, globalization, system of the higher education, reforming

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**CORRESPONDENCE** Nursafa Gafurovna Khairullina ✉ [nursafa@inbox.ru](mailto:nursafa@inbox.ru)

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## Introduction

Globalization, radical changes that take place in the world have a great impact not only on the development of material-technical and scientific-theoretical foundations of social progress, but also on socio-political and ideological processes, formation of free and progressive social consciousness (Belonozhko, Lavrischev, 2013; Khairullina, Moskatova, Nedosekina, Obidina, Stepanov, Sterledeva, Shitova, 2013; *Gaisina, Mikhaylovskaia, Khairullina, Ustinova, Shakirova, 2015*). Over the last decade on the territory of former Soviet Union significant changes have happened in management arrangements of education: legal framework has been formed, departmental approach to the management of educational institutions has overcome, interaction of state and public forms of education management are becoming, role of education is growing. The society formed a new approach to understanding of modern education, based on its quality and introduction of new innovative teaching technologies (Belonozhko, Rebysheva, 2012; Garabagiu, Ustinova, 2014). Education became one of the main priorities of the government in many countries, which tend to create a flexible mobile system of higher education that meets new requirements in terms of global competition (Frolov, Belonozhko, 2015).

Over the past decade Kazakh higher education system has undergone significant structural changes: higher education institutions have received a large degree of autonomy in management of their activities, a lot of freedom in determining education policy, direction of specialization of universities has changed, competitive environment has been created. However, some facts create a need to search for new strategic approaches in management of higher education. There are increasing demands of society to quality of higher education, deepening of imbalances between supply of educational services and needs of the labor market, inefficient use of public resources, oriented to higher education system, arising from a lack of mechanisms to coordinate objectives and results of operations of higher education institutions with needs of the state and society, a radical update in learning technologies, changes in organizational and educational institutions of economic governance mechanisms, increased competition in the market of educational services. (*Barbakov, Belonozhko, Siteva, 2015*).

At the moment, objective necessity of forming a model of state-public management system of higher education has extended in the country. On the one hand, this is dictated by the need to meet challenges of global change in the requirements for training, which are recorded in the documents of the Bologna agreement. On the other hand, reform program of Kazakhstan education stimulates transition of universities to a new education management policy by improving its quality system. In this process of integration of higher education of Kazakhstan into the world educational space it is necessary to find optimal balance between international educational trends and need to save and develop national system of higher education.

One of the main objectives of reforming higher education system of Republic of Kazakhstan is integration into the world educational space. At the same time the most important condition for integration of the educational process is cooperation of state authorities to regulate public institutions in management of higher education system.

At the same time, conducted analysis gives reason to believe that the interaction between individual, society and state is in infancy in indicated process (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Interaction of subjects in management system of higher education of Republic of Kazakhstan

Functions/subjects	Person	Society	State
Planning			
definition of labor market needs;	not active	not active	involved
formation of classifier of specialties	not active	not active	involved
formation of government order	not active	not active	involved
development of state obligatory standards of education	partly involved	not active	involved
development of model programs	partly involved	not active	involved
Organization			
creating of legislative and other normative legal framework for functioning of education	not active	not active	involved
update of educational, learning and teaching support and material and technical base.	partly involved	not active	involved
Control and analysis			
licensing	not active	not active	involved
state attestation	partly involved	not active	involved
accreditation	partly involved	partly involved	involved

## Method

Sociological surveys were conducted in order to identify the interaction between individual, society and state in control of a system of higher education (Ignatova, 2013; Ignatova, Omarova, 2014).

In the first phase a questionnaire survey was conducted among students of S.Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute and Innovative University of Eurasia. 412 students took part in a survey, 42.3% learn in S.Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, 24% in Pavlodar State Pedagogical Institute, 33.7% in Innovative University of Eurasia. 58.1% of respondents were girls and 41.9% were young men. At the same time 33.6% of respondents learn in technical specialties, 66.4% learn in field of Education and Human Sciences. 24.9% of the respondents are students of the first year, 37.4% are second year students and 37.7% are third year students.

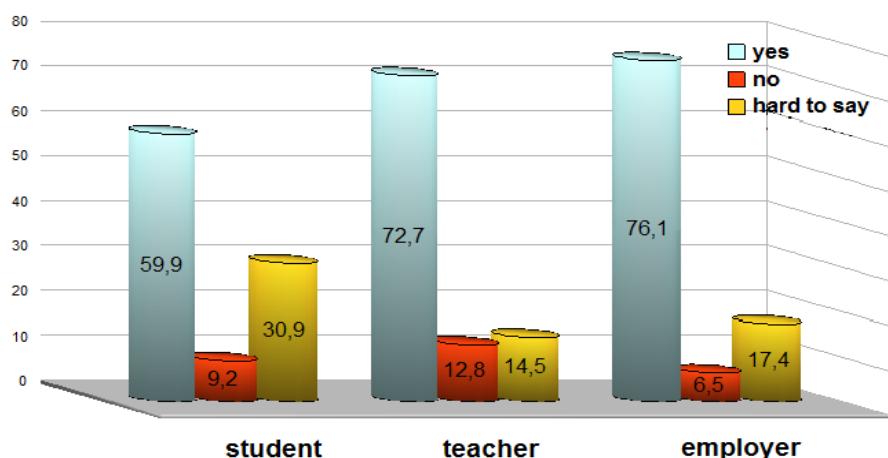
In the second stage research questionnaire was conducted among teachers of the same universities where students from the first stage are studying.

Totally 396 teachers were interviewed. 58.5% of the respondents are women and 41.5% are men. 24.3% of teachers have a degree; 41.4% are training specialists in technical professions, 58.6% are in the field of education and humanities.

In the third stage employers of Pavlodar region were interviewed, education management staff of Pavlodar region, secondary schools, pre-school institutions and enterprises of the city. 402 employers were interviewed, of which 198 people are educators, 204 are heads of various structural units of industrial enterprises, 8.4% have a work experience of 1-5 years, 34.4% have experience of 5-10 years and 57.2% have experience over 10 years. Most of surveyed people (94.1%) have higher education, 1.3% have vocational college, 4.6% have a degree. 38.2% of surveyed people work as head of organizations, 34.1% are supervisors, heads of departments and 27.7% are teachers, section supervisors.

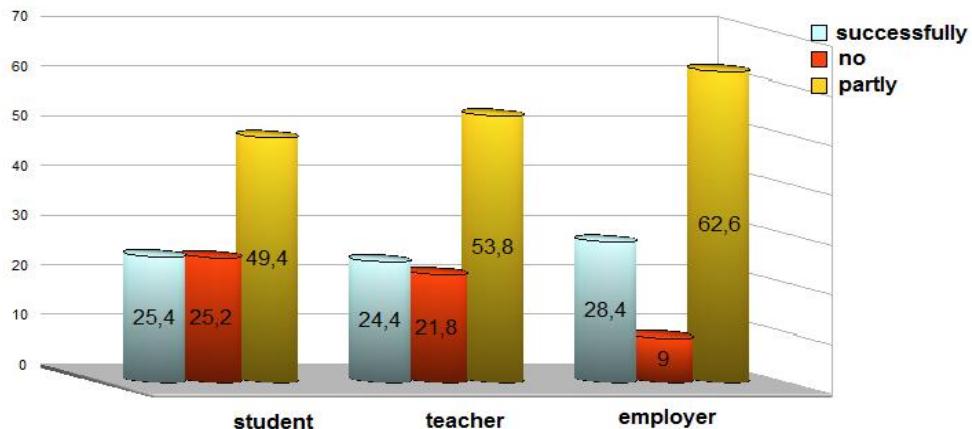
## Results

The findings of the research data showed that more than half of the surveyed students (59.9%), teachers (72.7%) and employers (76.1%) are informed about integration processes of the Republic of Kazakhstan higher education system into global educational environment, while 9.2% of students, 12.8% of teachers and 6.5% of employers do not know or are not informed (Figure 1).



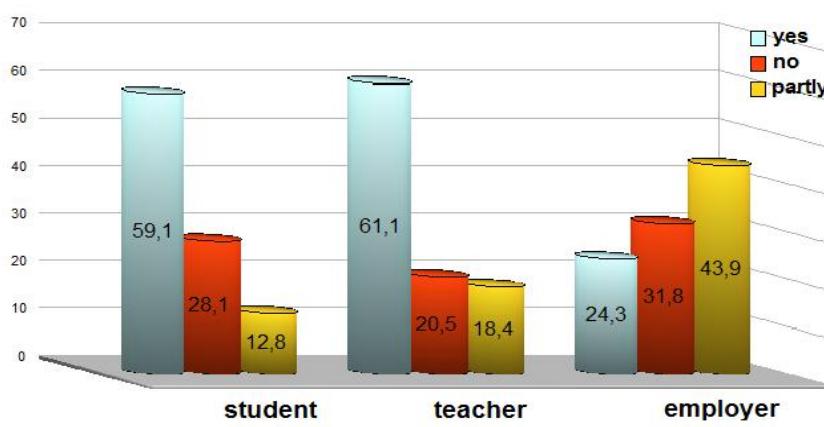
**Figure 1.** Awareness of respondents about processes of integration of higher education system at global educational environment, in % to the total number of respondents.

Every second teacher answered following question "How do you feel about the changes taking place in higher education?" (53.8%) that reforms are being successful, however, 21.8% of teachers have counter-opinion. Three-quarters of employers (62.2%) believe that higher education reforming is incomplete and 9.0% reported that process of reforming have a negative result. At the same time, we note that every second respondent (49.4%) among the students of Pavlodar universities gave a positive assessment about ongoing changes and a quarter of surveyed (25.2%) expressed a negative attitude (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Respondents' attitude to changes which are happening in higher education, in% to the total number of respondents

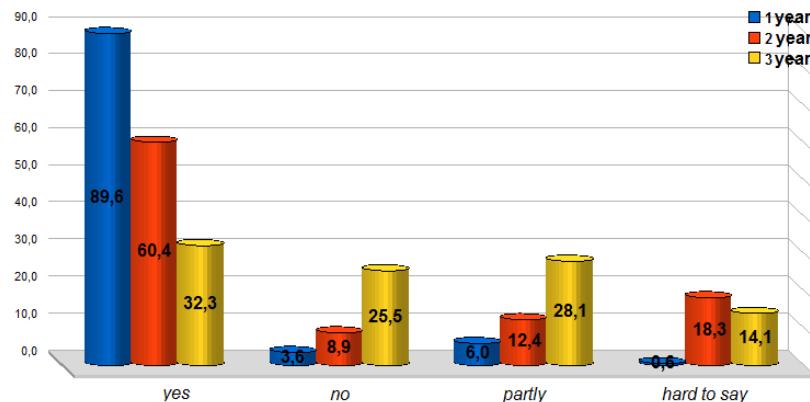
The dominant purpose of the management system of higher education is quality of education. In this regard, the respondents were asked a question "Is the higher education management modernization able to improve the quality of education?" Critically assessing the various aspects of the existing system of higher education in the region, about half of the respondents from surveyed students (59.1%), teachers (61.1%) and employers (43.9%) believe that effective modernization of management of higher education system is capable to improve the quality of training. At the same time, we note that number of students (12.8%), teachers (18.4%) and employers (43.9%) believe that reform of management system of higher education partly improve quality of training among graduated students. However, about a quarter of students, teachers and employers (28.1%, 20.5%, 31.8%, respectively) expressed that modernization of control system of higher education does not contribute toward improving the quality of education (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Respondents' opinion about increase (decrease) of the quality of preparation of students in conditions of modernization of management system of higher education, in % to the total number of respondents

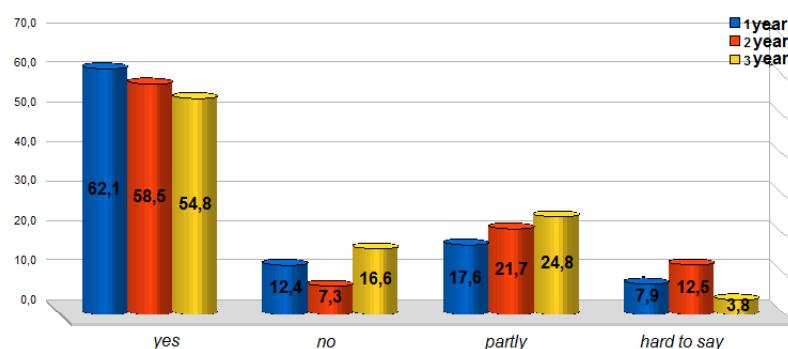


It is advisable to consider question of satisfaction of respondents by their education based on the fact that the most important factors affecting the quality of education is the quality of training, means of learning process and educational technologies, level of capacity of teaching staff, efficiency of achievements control, availability of feedback on the results of educational process, success of entering into society, coherence of the needs of individual, society and state in level and quality of education.



**Figure 4.** Students' satisfaction by their education on different courses of education, in % to the total number of respondents.

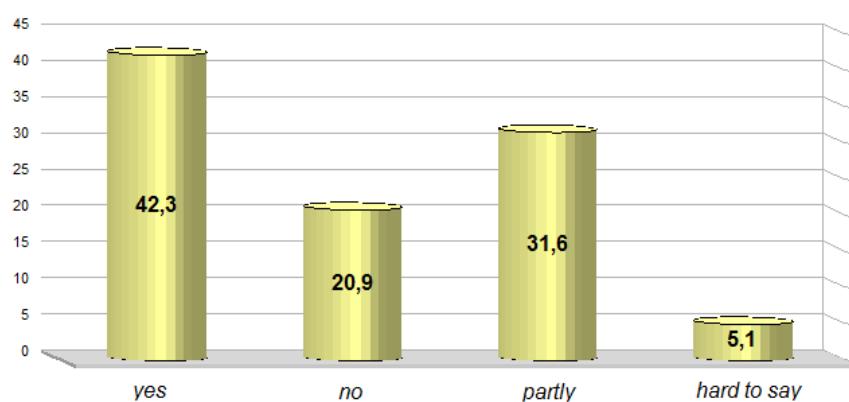
Despite the fact that measures to improve the management system of higher education are used in recent years in Republic of Kazakhstan, satisfaction with education received by the students seems quite pessimistic (Figure 4). Thus, the majority of first-year students (89.6%) answered "yes" to the question "Are you satisfied to get an education?", only third of third-year students are satisfied with their education (32.3%). For example, every fourth student among third-year students (25.5%) is not satisfied or partially satisfied (28.1%) with the education (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Satisfaction of students of different courses of volume of acquired knowledge, in % to the total number of respondents.

From the data presented in Figure 5, it is clear that senior courses reduced rates of students' satisfaction about their knowledge and skills level. This is explained by the fact that senior students have already passed externship and they experience lack of training in theoretical and in practical areas. In informal interviews students explain this situation by the fact that many of them do not learn in the specialty they wanted to learn. They study on specialty where competition was less or they used parent recommendations. As a result, unloved profession does not motivate them for academic success and for having a rewarding experience from acquired knowledge.

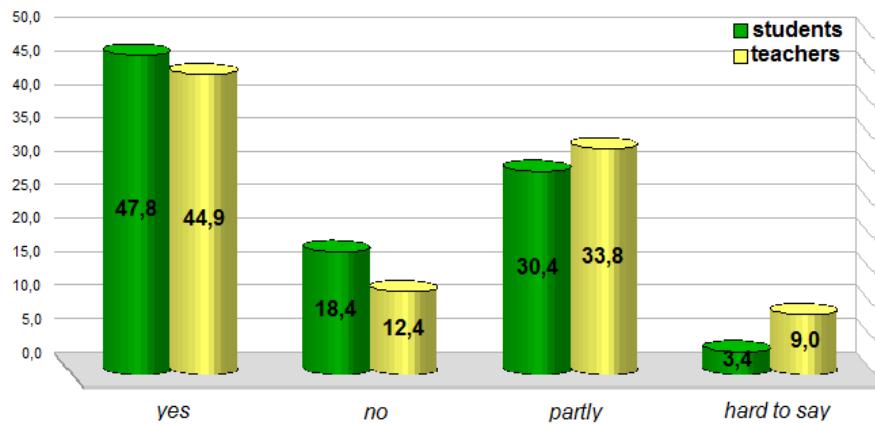
Teachers have different view about scope of obtained knowledge by students (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Teachers opinion about amount of education received by students in accordance with modern requirements, in % to the total number of respondents.

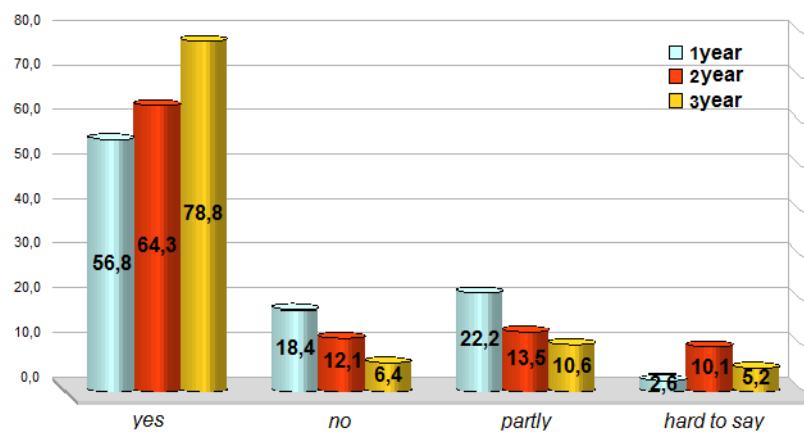
Less than half of the teachers (42.3%) believe that level of acquired by students knowledge comply with modern requirements. At the same time, every third teacher (31.6%) believes that level of education partly comply with modern requirements, and one of five (20.9%) does not agree with this. The survey results show that most of teachers are not fully satisfied with level of students' knowledge. One of the reasons that complicate learning is students' part time jobs (at different universities from 20 to 25% of full-time students have to combine study with work, in most cases related to future professional activity).

More than half of students are not fully satisfied with quality of educational process. At the same time 30.4% of the students partially satisfied and 18.4% are of the opposite opinion. It should be noted that evaluation of teachers do not differs from students' evaluations: more than a third of respondents (33.8%) partially satisfied and 12.4% are not satisfied with the quality of educational process (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Students' and teachers' satisfaction with quality of educational process, in % to the total number of respondents

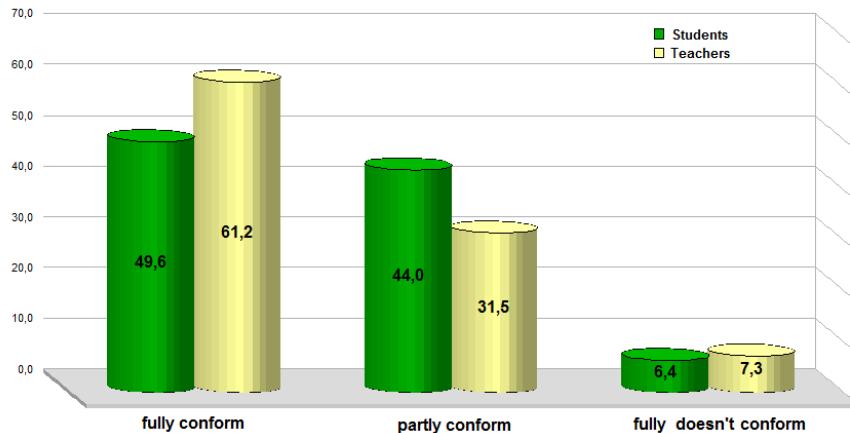
From the data presented in Figure 8 it is seen that senior students expressed low rates about quality of teaching. At the same time, we can say that 40.6%; 25.6%; 17.0% of students 1, 2, 3 courses are not satisfied or partly satisfied with quality of teaching. In this regard during the oral interview with students who are not satisfied with quality of education, a question "What have you done to improve quality of teaching?" was asked. 1 year students answered that they are not endow with such authority (56.8%) and students of second (4.3%) and third year (8.8%) responded that they are attempting to solve these problems through student governments, but they achieve positive results in only 1.7%. Teachers also mentioned such measures as performance at the Institute Council, use mass media, etc. Thus, the data clearly shows that students and teachers are not involved in management of higher education system.



**Figure 8.** Satisfaction of students of different courses by teaching quality, in % to the total number of respondents

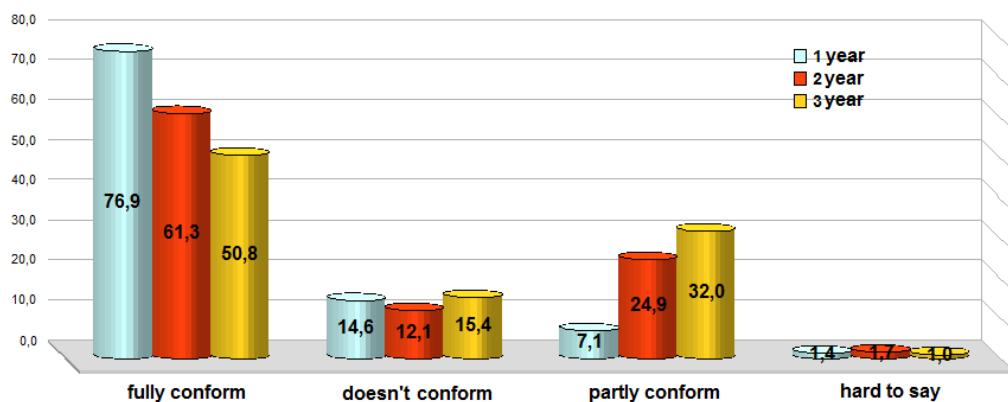
One of the reasons for dissatisfaction with quality of education by students' is level of professionalism of staff. As it can be seen in Figure 9, most students

mention matching of the level of professionalism of teaching staff (49.6%). Teachers evaluate professionalism of staff of the university slightly higher than students (61.2%).



**Figure 9.** Evaluation by students and professors level of professionalism of the staff of institution, in % to the total number of respondents

It should be noted that senior students estimated low level of satisfaction of requirements of their teachers (Figure 10). If among first-year students 76.9% were satisfied, among third-year 32% were partly satisfied and 15.4% do not satisfy with the level of requirements of teachers. This fact proofs that system demands of students to teachers worked out empirically, once again it confirms the fact that students do not participate in management, they are not familiar with legal framework, with the evaluation criteria activity of teachers, etc.

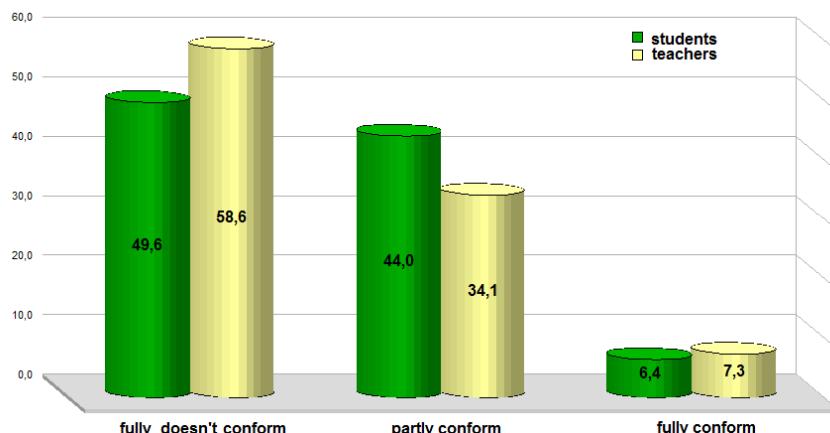


**Figure 10.** Satisfaction of students of different years of education to the level of requirements of teachers, in % to the total number of respondents

Reforming management system of higher education implies changes in the nature of education, focusing it on "free personal development", on creativity, autonomy of students, which involves formation of individual educational path



by students (Garabagiu, Ustinova, 2013; Belonozhko, Shaforost, 2015). Therefore it is interesting to identify respondents' assessment about the use of innovations in learning process focused on an individual approach in educational activities of students (Figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Evaluation of use of individual approach to educational activities of students, in % to the total number of respondents.

Most of students (93.6%) and teachers (92.7%) believe that level of use of an individual approach in learning process is insufficient (Figure 11). Thus, we can say that in management system of higher education subject-object relationship are dominant, where student is subject to control.

Students and teachers prefer auditorium form of classes: 68.8% and 63.7% respectively, which are carried out under direct supervision of a teacher. At the same time, similar forms of study focused on subject-object relationship do not aim on development of creativity and students' initiative and do not consider them as control subjects.

Answers to questions about students' life strategies for the future showed that most students (88.4%) plan to continue to work and improve their professional skills. At the same time 2.2% of students want to change their profession or obtain second higher education; 3.6% are aimed on obtaining scientific-pedagogical education; 5.8% answered "hard to say" (Table 2).

At the same time, 60.1% of respondents are generally optimistic about their future, 10.2% are anxious and uncertain, remaining 29.7% are not thinking about it. Along with this, students' opinion about employment prospects is quite positive (Table 3).

Despite the dissatisfaction of senior students of education level and amount of received knowledge, which do not have reliable information about the future needs of economy and social sphere of specialists, we can assume that the students lean mainly on historical information and their educational orientation. Most of them (89.3%) are confident in long term employment.

It was identified that optimistic forecasts do not correspond to employers' assessments of the real level of theoretical preparation of graduates, which is reflected in responses to the question "How do you evaluate the theoretical preparation of graduates?"

**Table 2.** Graduates' plans on the future depending on their satisfaction about obtained profession, in % to the total number of respondents

Graduates' project of life	Satisfaction about obtained profession			
	yes	no	not sure	total
I will work and I will improve my professional qualification	88.4	10.1	1.5	100
I will change my profession or I will obtain second higher education	2.2	96.5	1.3	100
I will obtain scientific and pedagogical education	3.6	90.6	5.8	100
Are you confident about your professional future?	60.1	10.2	29.7	100

**Table 3.** Students' opinions about their job prospects in chosen specialty, in % to the total number of respondents

Answer	1 year	2 year	3 year
Yes	69.8	74.5	89.3
No	17	17.4	4
Hard to say	13.2	8.1	6.7
Total	100	100	100

Theoretical preparation of graduates of Pavlodar universities was evaluated as "good" by 11.1% of respondents, more than half (85.7%) said "satisfactorily", 3.2% said "bad". Students and teachers of Pavlodar universities assessed training as "good" 54.8% and 42.5%, respectively; "satisfactory" said 41.4% and 52.3%. 3.8% of students and 5.2% of teachers gave negative evaluation. Thus, data that was obtained in the survey showed that prevailing assessment of the level of theoretical preparation of graduates is "satisfactorily", which gives reason to conclude that level of preparedness of students in their opinion is overestimated.

Analysis of responses about practical training of students showed that 63.2% of employers rate is "satisfactory", 13.6% said "bad" and 23.3% answered "good". Opposite opinion was expressed by students and teachers. 39.8% of students and 57.3% of teachers gave good assessment of practical training. About half of students (43.2%) evaluated practical training as "satisfactory", one-third of teachers (35.5%) agreed with them. At the same time 17% of students and 7.3% of teachers said "bad".

Answers to a questionnaire, that was given to teachers about qualities that graduate should possess, are presented in Table 4.



**Table 4.** Evaluation of qualities which must have a graduate by teachers, in % to the total number of respondents

Evaluation	Yes	No	Hard to say
High level of vocational preparation of graduates	69.7	28.3	2.0
High level of formation of qualities. allowing to adapt to the socio-economic conditions	68.9	28.4	2.7
High level of formation of ability to self-development	48.2	49.4	2.4
High level of cultural training	51.6	45.9	2.5

As it can be seen from the data shown in Table 4 more than half of teachers (69.7%) believe that graduated students should possess a high level of prejob training and formed qualities, which allow them to adapt to socio-economic conditions and have the ability to self-development and cultural level. Perhaps this is due to the fact that specialist training is aimed on formation of knowledge but not to the formation of competences (Table 5)

**Table 5.** Evaluation qualities of graduates by employers, in % to the total number of respondents

Quality of graduated students	Rank
Knowledge, abilities, skills	1
Artistic and research qualities	5
Organizational and business skills	6
Formedness of belief systems, convictions, active life position	4
Formedness of the ability to solve professional problems	2
The ability to solve problem-system tasks	3

As it can be seen from Table 5 employers put primarily knowledge and skills, in the second they put ability to solve professional problems, in the third they put ability to solve problem-system tasks. Employers put the ability to form a system of views, beliefs, active position in fourth place, creative and research qualities in the fifth and organizational and business skills in the sixth.

Respondents were asked "Do you take part in the management of the higher education system?" to identify participation in management system of higher education (Table 6).

As it can be seen from the data shown in Table 6 students do not participate in management of higher education system neither at national nor at regional levels. A small percentage of students, who participate in management at university level, are the most active individuals who are members of student organizations.

**Table 6.** Students' opinions about their participation in management of education system, in % to the total number of respondents

Functions of management	Management levels							
	state			state			state	
	yes	sometimes	no	yes	sometimes	no	yes	sometimes
								no
Participation in planning of higher education management system	-	-	100	-	-	100	-	2.4 97.6
Participation in organization of management of higher education system	-	-	100	-	-	100	-	3.6 96.4
Participation in control and analysis of management of higher education system	-	-	100	-	-	100	5.1 12.4	82.5

Teachers' answers to this question showed that small part of them is involved in planning and organization of management of higher education system, both as at the state as at the national level (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Teachers' opinion about their participation in management of education system, in % to the total number of respondents

Functions of management	Management levels							
	state			state			state	
	yes	sometimes	no	yes	sometimes	no	yes	sometimes
								no
Participation in planning of higher education management system	3.3	-	96.7	-	-	100	9.3 52.7	38
Participation in organization of management of higher education system	5.3	-	94.7	7.6	1.3	91.1 18.1	36.4 45.5	
Participation in control and analysis of management of higher education system	-	2.5	97.5	-	6.0	94.0 84.0	14.4 1.6	



These include members of national educational associations and heads of educational institutions. 2.5% of respondents reported about their involvement in control and analysis of management of higher education system. This is due to the fact that sometimes members of state certification and accreditation commissions invite teachers. Heads of departments, deans of faculties and business unit supervisors participate on a high school level in planning and organization, Monitoring and analysis is carried out mainly in period of current intermediate controls as well as during the final state certification.

Employers' responses to the question about their participation in management of higher education system indicate that they are not involved in management (Table 8).

Minor part of respondents, who took part in management, are members of State Attestation Commission.

**Table 8.** Employers' opinion about their participation in management of education system, in % to the total number of respondents

Functions of management	Management levels						no	
	state		regional		university			
	yes	sometimes	no	yes	sometimes	no		
Participation in planning of higher education management system	1.2	-	98.8	-	-	100	-	
Participation in organization of management of higher education system	2.2	-	97.8	-	-	100	-	
Participation in control and analysis of management of higher education system	-	-	100	-	-	100	2.7 97.3	

## Discussion

The results showed that training of specialists in universities is focused primarily on the acquiring of knowledge, whereas efficient management of higher education system must ensure formation of a competent and professional person who knows how independently and creatively solve professional problems, to be aware of personal and social significance of professional activity.

The results also showed students' inability to fully realize idea of individual educational path, correlating needs of the individual in choice of training content with approved by Ministry of Education and Science training standard. And as a result, teachers are not able to provide students with good syllabus. Once again

this proves that personal element is missing in determining educational content in management of higher education system.

The main reasons of it are the following:

- lack of experience of teachers in a business environment, which leads to more academic education;
- lack of communication of universities with organizations, where students could do practical training, learn to solve important practical problems;
- orientation of higher education to theorize approach to education;
- no interaction in satisfaction of requirements of each subjects of management system of higher education.

If these problems need to be solve it is necessary to practice various forms of additory qualification of students, learning related concepts of knowledge, give students certifications as specialists in various technologies; attract business organizations to management of higher education system.

## Conclusion

Over the past decade Kazakh higher education system have been undergoing significant structural changes: higher education institutions have received a large degree of autonomy in management of their activities, freedom in determining education policy, direction of specialization of universities has changed, competitive environment has been created. However, increasing demands of society to the quality of higher education, deepening of imbalances between offer of educational services and needs of the labor market, inefficient use of public resources, oriented to higher education system, arising from lack of mechanisms to coordinate objectives and results of operations of higher education institutions with needs of the state and society, radical update in learning technologies, changes in organizational and educational institutions of economic governance mechanisms, increased competition on educational services market, create need to search for new strategic approaches in management of higher education.

Sociological study, aimed on identifying interaction between individual, society and state in management of higher education system has shown following trends:

- subjects of administrative and educational processes understand the need to reform higher education system;
- there is no interaction between subjects in requirements development to the quality of education as a result of education;
- there is no interaction between public authorities and institutes of public regulation in determining content of higher education.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

**Nursafa Gafurovna Khairullina** holds a PhD in sociology in science education and now is professor at Industrial University of Tyumen, Tyumen, Russia.



**Oksana Vyacheslavovna Ustinova** holds a PhD in science education and now is professor at Industrial University of Tyumen, Tyumen, Russia.

**Natalya Lvovna Antipina** holds a PhD in science education and now is professor at Industrial University of Tyumen, Tyumen, Russia.

**Vera Konstantinovna Zykov** holds a PhD in science education and now is professor at Tyumen Higher Military Engineering Command School (Military Institute) named. Marshal of Engineering Troops, Tyumen, Russia.

**Tatyana Alekseyevna Romanov** holds a PhD in science education and now is professor at Tyumen State Medical University, Tyumen, Russia.

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